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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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August 7, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR

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SUBJECT: NVN Assessments

As I mentioned on the phone, John Bushnell and I did a critical review of your assessments. Outlined below are some of our reactions (undoubtedly off the mark in some cases). They may give you some ideas for the latest drill.

John and I will be happy to get together with you and Paul to discuss this in more detail. Or we could meet in a couple of days to discuss your draft report, early enough to give you time to make changes before Thursday evening.

Let me know how we can help.

In our view, the studies are to make clear where, to what extent and when the bombing and mining will disrupt the North. Some of the particular problems are:

-- Timing. Thus far we have assessments only of what the physical situation is now and what it will be over a full year. We need a more refined analysis of where the North will be hurt when.

-- Economic Analysis. The economic studies are too aggregative; they do not examine the problems in particular sectors. For example, fertilizer imports have been greatly expanded in the past few years because of the use of new types of rice. Yet fertilizer is not included in CIA's minimal essential import level. How and when will lack of fertilizer reduce food production? Will farmers have to switch back from new to traditional rice? What other agricultural inputs are critical? Nor is there an examination of the implications of the reduction in power supply. Will agricultural pumping be curtailed causing flooding or limiting irrigation (DIA informally says no, but we would

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like to see the analysis). How much does the power shortage curtail industry making bombing superfluous?

-- Feel for the Situation. The details have not been provided to give the reader a comprehensive feel for the situation. For example, the studies do not indicate how urban sectors are affected in comparison with rural areas. The CIA study says the fish catch will be reduced by 25 percent. But it does not point out that this is the catch of the bigger sea-going boats that supply Hanoi and Haiphong and thus the remaining urban population will have little fresh fish and will have to do without this most important protein source or imported dried fish will have to be arranged.

-- Import Denial and Destruction. The studies do not differentiate clearly between the effects of import denial and of bomb destruction and disruption.

There are also major substantive shortcomings in the work which has been done:

-- Stocks. An assessment of the North's stock position is obviously critical for short-term projections, yet we know very little about this. The raw intelligence on stocks is limited, but some analysis should be possible by looking at recent import information and the cargos known to be available from the 26 ships remaining in the harbors.

-- Current Imports. How much and what is coming across the Chinese border is obviously critical to any assessment, but we do not yet have a systematic assessment of volume or composition. (I understand that some analysts believe as much as 4000 tons a day is being imported in July on the basis of freight car arrivals at the Chinese border.)

-- Import Levels Below the Essential Minimum. Your studies have not said what happens if imports drop below the estimated minimal levels. Nor have they discussed the nature and extent of problems that would be caused by particular shortages. For example, how would a serious POL shortage affect the economy?

-- Manpower. There is no comprehensive analysis of the manpower situation although the repair of bomb damage, movement by road instead of rail, dispersal of operations, etc. will require major additional manpower on top of the heavy draft calls of recent years. Informally the

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analysts have told us they do not believe the manpower restraint will be critical because of the large numbers of people still engaged in agriculture. But this overlooks problems caused by shortages of management personnel or manpower shortages in some geographic areas. Moreover, more not less manpower may be needed to increase agricultural production to offset reduced imports. There is evidence of at least some manpower shortages even before the bombing. Why else was the dike repair not completed? Why the stringent manpower decree just issued?

-- Battlefield Support. The studies do not analyze in detail what items the economy of the North supplies to the battlefield other than to say not much. Will the bombing reduce the supply of uniforms and other personnel equipment? Medicines? How about truck and tank repair? We have hit a number of these facilities.

I hope this sheds at least some light on the problem.



Philip A. Odeen  
Director, Program Analysis

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